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MEMORANDUM FOR: Members, OTR Educational Committee

SUBJECT : Training Report Forms

*12 Jan 60
(Per original filed
in Tracy Coal Report
file)*

1. Several months ago, stimulated by one of the judgments in the IG Survey Report on the AAE Staff, DTR requested PPS and AES to develop a simplified, one-page form for reporting individual student achievement in an OTR course. The draft of the proposed form, accompanied by a guide for preparation of the report, was distributed (in several copies) to each school chief early in October. Two requests were made: (1) that each school try out the proposed report form by preparing one sample report, on an average or typical student, for each of a few designated courses; and (2) that each school chief invite each of his instructors to submit comments on the proposal. At the first meeting of the OTR Educational Committee on 29 October 1959 it was agreed that PPS and AES would review and summarize the completed, trial training reports and the comments which have been submitted by the Schools to PPS concerning the proposed, one-page training report form.

2. Looked at from a supervisor's point of view, the trial reports were all very well done and provided useful and pertinent information. In some instances it was evident that additional, detailed information could have been provided as is done in reporting forms currently in use.

3. The comments received for the most part favored in principle the use of simplified, standard, one-page form. Others concurred in the need for standardization but offered other suggestions as to the means of reporting most appropriate for specific courses. The most pertinent comments and questions are paraphrased as follows, with PPS-AES "answers" or explanations.

a. Q: Why are we insisting on a one-page form?

A: We are not. When the problem was put to us by higher authority, the desirability of a simplified, one-page form, if feasible, was emphasized.

b. Q: Why is it necessary to include a statement of course or training objectives, etc., on the training report when this information is generally available in the OTR Training Catalog or in the OTR Bulletin? This seems to be unnecessary duplication, involves additional clerical work, and takes up considerable space on the report form!

BOX NO. FLD NO. DOC. NO. 54 NO. CHANGE
IN CLASS/ DECLASS. CLASS CHANGED TO 100-3 C RET. JUST.
NEXT REV DATE 10/8/59 TYPE DOC. 02
NO. PCS 4 CREATION DATE 11/1/59 ORG COMP 11 OFFICE CLASS 5
REV CLASS 7 REV COORD. AUTH: HR 70-3

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A: This information does in fact take up space on the report form but it is deemed necessary and pertinent because (1) not all current supervisors have the Catalog and/or Bulletin immediately and readily available to them; (2) future supervisors (and career panels, etc.) will not necessarily have available to them the Catalog which was current when the training was accomplished; and (3) many if not all OTR courses are flexible and subject to change as they are revised and improved to meet new requirements and to include new material and instructional techniques. Further, the brief description of the course contained in the Catalog may not suffice also for the intended purposes of the training report. In any event, we must bear in mind that we are reporting for the permanent record as well as to the current supervisor and in this sense the training report is considered along with fitness reports and reassignment questionnaires.

c. Q: If our present forms are adequate, why are we bothering to consider changing them?

A: As far as we know, no one has said recently that the present forms are inadequate. However, nearly every course employs a different form and format, different styles of reporting, and different standards of measurement which may be somewhat confusing to the supervisor. We are seeking now to determine how and to what extent some standardization and simplification can be accomplished without decreasing the utility and objectivity of the reporting. It is quite possible that we could arrive at some standardization of format.

d. Q: Why should not adjectival ratings be used? These are standard devices in the field of education; moreover, people like to know how they stand with respect to the rest of the class.

A: There is no real objection to adjectival ratings as such as long as it is clear how they were arrived at and if we can arrive at a standard definition in OTR of such terms as "unsatisfactory," "satisfactory," "excellent," etc. However, we believe that in most cases some supplementary narrative evaluation or comment is essential to ensure a truly accurate and meaningful description of a student's performance and achievement; of observed strengths and weaknesses in his grasp of the subject, his participation in discussions and seminars, his special interests, aptitudes, and observed capabilities, ability at self-expression orally or in writing, etc. Surely, an "unsatisfactory" rating or a superior performance both merit comment. While we feel that the instructors should not be asked to "assess" the student (in an ASE sense!) in terms of his suitability for a certain job or jobs, the instructor

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should nevertheless bear in mind that the training report (i.e., training performance or achievement) will be taken into account along with other factors when the supervisor is making his decisions. It therefore may well be that we should arrive at adjectival ratings supplemented, when appropriate, by narrative comment.

e. Q: Does not the narrative form lend itself to subjective reporting and to possible misinterpretation?

A: It could, of course; however, even an adjectival rating, unless based entirely on some mechanical testing, can reflect some personal bias or subjective judgment. It is very necessary that any narrative reporting on training performance be accomplished with the same care and thoughtful objectivity which must go into the preparation of a fitness report.

f. Q: Are we to abandon competitive ranking in all courses?

A: Not entirely. We believe that we cannot and should not attempt to avoid healthy competition in training; however, we feel that we should not rank students numerically in the class in our reporting. It should suffice to note the student's general standing in the class.

g. Q: Would we gain by using two report forms, one for Personnel (records) and the other for training and for the student?

A: No. One report is workload enough.

4. No one commented on the fact that the proposed form is headed "Training Report" rather than "Training Evaluation Report". The form was deliberately designed to accommodate not only the courses which make an appraisal of individual student performance but also those which only certify attendance. Thus the label "Training Report" is recommended as the more generic term for this dual purpose form. This label does have the disadvantage of being somewhat less explicit than "Training Evaluation Report" and perhaps even runs the risk of confusion with other kinds of reports on training, such as course reports.

5. We have not commented on the instructor's reporting guide. A&E and PPS would like to incorporate the guide into the instructor's handbook. The first reading of the Guide for Preparation of Training Reports may give the impression that a good deal more information is being required than space is provided. We have to face the fact that considerable discretion is required.

6. Based upon the foregoing (which does not by any means include all of the thoughts submitted), we tentatively recommend, as the basis for further discussion and action by the OTE Educational Committee, that:

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a. We attempt to adopt a basic training report format which can be used either as a simple one-page report or which may be expanded to allow more detailed reporting of performance in varied subjects within a course (example: the Ops Support Course):

b. the form in each case cite the course or training objective (s), either in one paragraph as in the proposed form or in several paragraphs each related to a performance rating; this section of the form also should indicate the scope and method (s) of instruction and bases for evaluation of performance and achievement;

c. the achievement be measured or rated first, adjectivally (unsatisfactory, satisfactory, excellent, superior) with standard definitions throughout OTB, and secondly, as appropriate, by a supplementary or explanatory narrative report.

7. Your further consideration of this problem will be appreciated. This subject will be placed on the agenda of a Committee meeting in the near future.

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SIGNED


Educational Specialist